

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the Interview held on September 10, 2008 and for indicating that the proposed amendments would overcome the art of record.

Claims 2-11 and 13-26 are pending. By this amendment, claims 2, 13, 18, and 22 are amended and new claim 27 is added. Support for the amendments and new claim can be found at least in paragraphs [0012], [0013], [0014], and [0016] of the specification. No new matter is introduced. Reconsideration and issuance of a Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

On page 2 the Office Action rejects claims 2-7, 9-11, 13-17 and 22-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Published Patent Application 2002/0016875 to Yokoyama (hereafter Yokoyama) in view of U.S. Published Patent Application 6,032,266 to Ichinohe, et al. (hereafter Ichinohe). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yokoyama is directed to a communication method of an electronic apparatus that sequentially searches for different processors one-way down a serial chain of cameras (see Yokoyama, page 1, paragraph 9, lines 5-12 and the October 30, 2007 Response). However, Yokoyama does not disclose or suggest that a single processor residing in the first application module determines whether a control module is connected to the first application module by transmitting a first controller handshake signal through a first data port while inhibiting data pass-through at a second data port, and if the first control handshake signal does not result in communication with the control module, determines whether the control module is connected to a second application module by transmitting a second controller handshake signal through the second data port while inhibiting data pass-through at the first data port. Contrary to the assertion at page 6 of the Office Action, Yokoyama does not disclose or suggest determining or detecting whether a control module is connected to one of several application modules, let alone alternately determining the presence of the control module by transmitting control handshake signals through each of the data ports while inhibiting data pass-through at the respective other data port.

Ichinohe is directed to a network system having function of changing route upon failure. However, Ichinohe does not cure Yokoyama's defect because Ichinohe's network system merely uses two routers to attain a high reliability system in the event of failure. Ichinohe does not disclose or suggest using a single processor to alternately determine whether a control module is connected to one of several application modules by transmitting control handshake signals through each of the data ports connecting the control module to the

respective application module while inhibiting data pass-through at the respective other data port.

To the contrary, claim 2 has been amended to more precisely recite the novel features of the present application and recites: “a processor residing in a first application module ... wherein said processor determines whether said controller module is connected to said first application module by transmitting a first controller handshake signal through said first data port while inhibiting data pass-through at said second data port; and wherein, if said first handshake signal does not result in communication with said controller module at said first port, said processor determines whether said controller module is connected to said second application module by transmitting a second controller handshake signal through said second data port to establish communication with said controller module while inhibiting data pass-through at said first data port.” As noted above and agreed upon during the September 10, 2008 Interview, Yokoyama and Ichinohe, individually and in combination, do not disclose or suggest these features. Therefore, amended claim 2 is patentable.

Amended claims 13 and 22 recite features similar to those of claim 2, and for this reason, claims 13 and 22 also are patentable.

Claims 3-7 and 9-11 depend from patentable claim 2; claims 14-17 depend from patentable claim 13; claims 23-26 depend from patentable claim 22. For these reasons and the additional features they recite, claims 3-7, 9-11, 14-17, and 23-26 also are patentable.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-7, 9-11, 13-17 and 22-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

On page 7 the Office Action rejects claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 4,174,536 to Misunas, et al. (hereafter Misunas). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Misunas is directed to a digital communications controller with firmware control. However, similar to Yokoyama, Misunas does not disclose or suggest alternately determining whether a control module is connected to one of several application modules by transmitting control handshake signals through each of the data ports connecting the control module to the respective application module while inhibiting data pass-through at the respective other data port. Applicant respectfully traverses the Official Notice taken on page 7 of the Office Action and requests that an reference be provided.

To the contrary, amended claim 18 has been amended to more precisely recite the novel features of the present application and recites: “first application module housing said processor and said first and second data ports; wherein said processor determines whether

said controller module is connected to said first application module and said second application module by transmitting respective controller handshake signals alternately through said first and second data ports while inhibiting data pass-through at the respective other data port.” As noted above, Misunas does not disclose or suggest these features.

Therefore, amended claim 18 is patentable over Misunas.

Claims 19-21 depend from patentable claim 18. For these reasons and the additional features they recite, claims 19-21 also are patentable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 18-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

On page 8 the Office Action rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yokoyama in view of Ichinohe and further in view of Massimiliano Brocchini (hereafter Brocchini).

Brocchini is an EasyDisk removable USB hard disk review. However, Brocchini does not cure Yokoyama and Ichinohe’s defect and does not disclose or suggest alternately determining whether a control module is connected to one of several application modules by transmitting control handshake signals through each of the data ports connecting the control module to the respective application module while inhibiting data pass-through at the respective other data port. Therefore, amended claim 2 is patentable over Yokoyama, Ichinohe, and Brocchini.

Claim 8 depends from patentable claim 2. For these reasons and the additional features they recite, claim 8 also is patentable. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

New Claim

New claim 37 is allowable at least because it depends from patentable claim 2, and for the additional features it recites.

Conclusion

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Prompt examination and allowance are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desired in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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